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Moslem Kidnappers Kill Soviet in Beirut

Caller Threatens to Blow Up Embassy

EXCERPTED

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Special to The Washington Post

BEIRUT, Oct. 2—The body of a Soviet diplomat, shot in the head at close range, was found this morning dumped in a wasteland south of Beirut after a caller claiming to speak for Moslem fundamentalist kidnappers told a western news agency where to look for it.

The caller, saying he spoke for the Islamic Liberation Organization, threatened that the three remaining Soviet hostages kidnapped here Monday afternoon would be killed "one after the other if the atheistic campaign against Islamic Tripoli does not stop."

Syria, Moscow's closest ally in the Middle East, has backed an offensive by leftist forces in the northern city of Tripoli against strongholds of the Sunni Moslem fundamentalist militia known as Tawheed. The fighting, which began Sept. 15, has caused at least

200 deaths and has led to the evacuation of many of the city's 700,000 residents.

The killing of the Soviet diplomat, identified as consular secretary Arkady Katkov, was followed by another call to an American news agency in the name of the previously unknown Islamic Liberation Organization, warning that the Soviet Embassy in west Beirut would be "demolished" over the heads of "Soviet diplomatic staff and members of the KGB," the Soviet secret police. The caller set a deadline of 48 hours for the Soviet compound to be evacuated.

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The fate of the three remaining Soviet hostages appeared tonight to hinge on events in Tripoli, where the Syrian-backed leftist forces were increasing the pressure on the fundamentalist Tawheed, or Islamic Unification Movement.

There were indications here that the leftist militias, with Syria's tacit approval, would not accept a cease-fire as demanded by the kidnappers here unless three conditions were met. These were democratic freedom in Tripoli, where daily life has been ruled by the fundamentalists according to strict Islamic regulations since 1983; the collection of arms from all factions, and the entry of Syrian troops into the city, Lebanon's second largest.

The Tawheed leader, Sheik Saeed Shaaban, traveled to Damascus last night during a truce of several hours for meetings with Syrian Vice President Abdul Halim Khad-dam and other officials. The fundamentalist cleric was accompanied to

Damascus by an Iranian team and by the spokesman of the Iranian-backed Hezbollah, or Party of God, Sheik Ibrahim Amin.

Shaaban is believed to be resisting the deployment of Syrian troops in Tripoli, which the Syrians and their allies are demanding as a way to end the fighting. Syria is determined to control Tripoli to guard against a return to the city by forces loyal to Palestine Liberation Organization Chairman Yasser Arafat.

Syrian intelligence officials and journalists who toured the approaches to Tripoli this morning reported that Shaaban's Tawheed

forces are blockaded from all sides. The leftist forces—members of the Arab Democratic Party, the pro-Syrian Baath Party, the National Syrian Social Party and the Lebanese Communist Party—claim to have captured about 30 buildings in one strategic quarter called Abu Samra, where diehard Tawheed fighters are dug in.

Although fighting was continuing, the heavy artillery bombardment of the city from the Syrian-controlled hills around it subsided.

A statement issued here tonight in the name of the Islamic Liberation Organization said, "We declare readiness to set free the three hostages should the truce continue, a total cease-fire prevail, armed men be withdrawn and a pledge be made that attacks on Moslem Tripoli do not resume."

The statement warned that if the kidnappers' demands were not met, "We will continue to execute the hostages and will hold the Soviet Union responsible for ... its stooges in Lebanon."

President Amin Gemayel expressed his regrets and condolences at Katkov's killing to Soviet Charge d'Affaires Yuri Souslikov. The Shiite Moslem Amal and Druze militias expressed "shock" and "deep sympathies" at "this cowardly action."